

Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. today introduced the Liberia Stabilization, Economic Empowerment, Development and Security Act -- or the "Liberia SEEDS Act" in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill provides vital assistance to the West African nation, helping "a staunch American ally to sow the seeds of a better and brighter future."

"I'm proud to join with my colleagues in introducing this important measure to help Liberia overcome the heart-breaking atrocities of brutal civil wars stretching more than a decade. Under the courageous, new leadership of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberia is emerging from the ruin, striving to heal the deep wounds, maintain the fragile peace and rebuild the shattered country. This legislation responds to the challenge by focusing U.S. assistance on Liberia's recovery and development," Jackson said.

The bill provides \$225 million in economic and development assistance to Liberia during the next five years. The funds provide assistance for specific infrastructure projects, including reconstructing the main port, key roads and bridges, water and sanitation systems, and the electricity network. In addition, the aid will support Liberia's public-sector programs that enhance government accountability; improve the national police force; retrain and employ ex-combatants; and promote human rights and the rule of law.

"The ties between Liberia and the United States are strong and deep. With this legislation, we renew that historic bond and extend our hand to a close friend and ally. As the people of Liberia rebuild, America is proud to stand by their side offering the tools they need to pave the path of peace and progress," Jackson concluded.

The legislation is co-sponsored by many high-ranking Members, including

Congressman James Clyburn, the Democratic Whip; Congressman Howard Berman, the Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee; and Congressman Donald Payne, the Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health. In addition, the bill is supported by Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as well as more than two hundred National NGOs in Liberia.

In his seventh term, Congressman Jackson sits on the House Appropriations Committee, serving as the Vice-Chair of the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs as well as the fourth most senior Democrat on the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education, and Related Agencies. He also sits on the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies.

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